

JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAI‘I

ORAL HISTORY

with

Robert M. Yamamoto (RY)

June 2, 2006

BY: Florence Sugimoto (FS)
Assisted by: Gladys Yamamoto (GY)

FS: In this interview, Mrs. Gladys Yamamoto may assist her husband in recalling details of his internment.

Please give us your full name, the year that you were born, and your birthplace.

RY: I am Robert Mikio Yamamoto, born July 12, 1924, Kaloa, Wahiawa, Kauai.

FS: Is that Koloa or Kaloa?

RY: Kaloa.

FS: It's on Kauai?

RY: Kauai, yes. Wahiawa, Kauai.

FS: And your father's name...

RY: My father's name is Ryuichi Yamamoto.

FS: And your mother's name?

RY: Hana Yamamoto.

FS: When did they come to Hawaii and why?

RY: In 1906, my father, and my mother, in 1914. They came over here, had a contract, from State, I guess, Hawaii, sugar plantation work. My father. My mother came over here picture bride.

FS: Was this on the island of Hawaii?

RY: Kauai.

FS: Now when and why did you go to Japan?

RY: When? My mother died in 1927, so my father cannot support the whole family and me.

FS: How many children were there?

RY: Before I was born, my father went back to Japan and left my older brother and sister...

FS: On Kauai?

RY: In Japan. His plan was going back to Japan, so my older brother, who was school age, so he wanted all the three children to have Japanese education. Especially my older brother is getting to seven years old. So he took the three children back to Japan. He and his wife left the children and came back to Hawaii.

FS: This was when your mother passed away that he went to Japan?

RY: No.

FS: And then he left the three children in Japan and returned to Hawaii.

GY: I would like to correct that. He left (speaking to husband) your brothers and sister and returned to work again in Kauai, then he (husband) was born, and then she died, right?

RY: Oh, yes.

FS: Oh, I see.

FY: You see, especially my sister, probably she was one or two years old. Three children left in Japan, and he came back to Hawaii. For my mother, it was so hard. She was working hard so she can see her children again.

FS: And then you were born.

RY: Yes, and then I was born.

FS: Then why did you have to go to Japan at all? I understand you went to Japan too.

RY: Yes, that's right.

FS: Why and when did you go?

RY: Well, my mother passed away. My father was something about 36 years old. And at that time, I was about two or three years old. So he cannot support me here. Not only that he cannot support his whole family, my two brothers and sister in Japan, and my

grandparents in Japan. Five people was waiting for his salary to survive. So he don't have any choice but Japanese call it "*hiki ageru*." He have to, wanted go back already. He cannot survive in Hawaii with all, seven in the family—children and grandparents. That's five, and me and him, seven. So he just went back to Japan.

FS: So when you went back to Japan, you went back with him?

RY: Yes.

FS: Now, in Japan, how long did you have to go to school?

RY: My education in Japan is eight years. Six years what they call basic Japanese for six years -- two years for *Kohtohka* (Grades 7 and 8) for normal kids. Some wealthy people can afford for higher class, it's going to be high school in Japan in those days, so you have to pay for it, but not us.

FS: So you were a student for about eight years?

RY: Exactly eight years.

FS: And then after that, what did you do?

RY: That year I graduated, we had a severe drought... no rain. I started to help my father, every day, to prepare for the rice crop. Japan was at war with China, so I have to go to weekend training. So that's when my after school life started. But according to my father, he said, "Our drought is so bad, I don't think we're going to have rice for ourselves."

FS: So what he decide to do?

RY: So my uncle was working one company in Kudamatsu that he can find for us some labor work. So my father and I started going labor work in Kudamatsu and that's when my real life started.

FS: What kind of work?

RY: This was real rough work. I was only fifteen or sixteen years old. Besides a little farm work, I didn't know anything so the place I worked is a contract labor people. My first work was t get ready for the coming winter, so I had to get and cut the dry wood for the coming winter.

FS: Dry root?

RY: No, dry wood. For make warm the office like that, you know.

FS: Warm the office?

RY: Yes, small office.

FS: To make something...

RY: No, for the stove.

FS: Oh, a stove!

RY: We don't have charcoal.

FS: You made stoves?

RY: No, no. The stove is just charcoal type of stove.

FS: So what was your work?

RY: To cut the wood for the stove.

FS: Oh, to cut wood.

RY: So I was on the oil company property, but I was not working for the oil company, I working for this contractor that service Japan oil company.

FS: How long did you do that?

RY: Probably I work about couple months. And then my life changed. I don't know how I got into this Japan oil company. I don't remember. But what I remember is that my labor contractor office and the place I start working is nearby. They call the place *jikkenshitsu*. They prepare for future oil product.

FS: Sort of experimental laboratory?

RY: Yeah. But I don't know how I get in there. Don't know. Anyway, my boss told me, "Go to the building," and I start working in *jikkenshitsu* to prepare for better product for the company.

FS: Now after that...

RY: After that, I start to learn. In fact, I didn't know anything about oil. I never knew anything and then my place have to get the crude oil from the tanker coming in from California, Standard Oil Company. First time I saw oil, crude oil. I didn't know anything about crude oil.

FS: So you learned a lot at that company.

RY: Yeah. Learned how to produce crude oil, to refine the crude oil, to separate the grade, gasoline, gas...

FS: And how long were you there, doing that kind of work?

RY: I worked over there something about two years. In the meantime, my brother came back from Hawaii, looking for a bride. So he married. That time my brother told me... I was thinking about coming [going to] Hawaii... but he said, "Hawaii has no job for you. You have a better job here." That's what he told me, so I continued working for the oil company. In the meantime, the oil company want to give young people better education, like me. Don't know anything about oil, don't know anything, so they gave me free schooling and work. So at that time I start to learn about oil, where oil producing, where oil come from California. And the manager said they heard that Indonesia, Sumatra, had crude oil in those days. I guess that was probably 1940, 1941.

FS: Now how did it happen that you came back (to Hawaii)?

RY: My brother wrote me saying that Hawaii coming better economy, so if you want to come back to Hawaii, he said he can find the job. But he said, "That's up to you. I'm not telling you to come."

FS: Was he the only brother that was still here (in Hawaii)?

RY: No, my other brother was living here too. My older brother, the one that told me don't come, now wrote me in January 1941, to come if you want to. So I cannot decide. At that time I was living in Kudamatsu, so I went back to my old man place and I talked to my father. I said, "This kind letter came. What do you think?" He said, "I cannot tell you." When I was young, when I was about sixth grade, he was telling me, "You know, Robert, you are number three boy. Your older brothers are supporting the Yamamoto family. You are number three. So you are free to go on your own. He said, "From Yamamoto, you don't have anything." My two older brothers is going to take over the Yamamoto but "You are number three. But you know the Japanese style, usually go to *yoshi* [adoption through marriage] or if you make it good, you're lucky, but it's all on you. Nothing from Yamamoto, don't forget that." But you know, only twelve years old, I don't know what he's talking about. (Laughs.) But when I come to this decision, coming to Hawaii, all up to me.

FS: You made the decision to come.

RY: I made the decision. I said, "I'm going to Hawaii."

FS: When was this?

RY: 1941.

FS: What month?

RY: Probably... I came back about May or June.

FS: Now when you came back to Hawaii, did you have a job?

RY: Job was waiting for me. But this job waiting for me, now I think back, how the heck I coming back Hawaii. For me, the company give us four years paid schooling and after that, I come back to a normal job, I still get full pay with the schooling after the work.

FS: Where was this?

RY: That was going on Japan. Japan oil company. So lots of people say that why this crazy guy, quitting the good job. Later on I found out they couldn't understand me. Why Hawaii? The Hawaii that I don't know. I left Hawaii only two years old. I don't have nothing in Hawaii, so why I coming to Hawaii? I was making money now that time. I was saving money.

FS: What made you decide to come?

RY: Deep down in my heart someplace, this the one my life changed. Somehow I live in Japan, I cannot see my futures. I just cannot see. I cannot see in Japan the future. I have a future right here, working at the company, and making money, and graduating school. That time I know pretty good about oil, but I quit the school and I came back Hawaii.

FS: And you were able to come back paying your way?

RY: I never had the full amount, but my old man told me, my father told me, "If you need the money, that part I can support you." But I think I had the money. You know why? The two years I work for the company I was saving, I think I was saving every month, *go-en* [five yen]. That's a very small money, but I had the money, something close to *ni-hyaku-en* [200 yen]. *Ni-hyaku-en*, I think can buy the ticket, one way ticket to Hawaii. But I told my father, "I cannot draw the money right out, so later on you can draw the money out and you can have that."

FS: So where did you come as soon as you landed? Did you go to your brother's place?

RY: Yes, my brother's place.

FS: And you worked at his place?

RY: No, I worked at my second brother's working place, the Nuuanu Auto Company on Nuuanu Avenue. That's where my job was waiting for me.

FS: Now let's come to December 7th, 1941. What were you doing that day?

RY: Well, December 7th was Sunday. We don't have work, so I was in Waipahu. They call it Pump 4 Plantation Camp.

FS: What were you doing?

RY: Well, that morning my big brother told me, "Ey, the vegetable is growing up the hill in Waipahu." So he wanted me to go over there, he and I going up the hill, and you know our camp is in a gulch-like place. He's working way up the cane field, that's the way we climbed up.

FS: He lived in Waipahu?

RY: He lived in Waipahu, plantation camp.

FS: But the shop was in Nuuanu?

RY: Yes, Nuuanu. So from Waipahu, get up at 5 o'clock in the morning, coming to Nuuanu Auto, back and forth.

FS: And you lived with your big brother in Waipahu in a camp?

RY: Yes.

FS: What kind of camp was that?

RY: It's a plantation labor camp located in the field. My brother was working for the Waipahu plantation.

FS: Oh, so he had two jobs? Oh, you're talking about your older brother?

RY: Older brother, yes.

FS: And now you were working in the vegetable garden?

RY: Yes, I went to the vegetable garden...

FS: And then?

RY: Pearl Harbor got bombed. Lots of airplanes going up, but we didn't know. So making noise, Pearl Harbor is right behind, right in front us. That's where the West Loch is, our camp is right behind, more way up mountain side. But all the airplane going but I'm in the cane field. My brother said, "This is unusual. Things going on." But we...

FS: You kept working?

RY: Yes, we were taking care of the vegetable garden.

FS: When did you find out that it was an attack?

RY: After finished, so probably about somewhere around 11 o'clock. We want to have a lunch at home, so we came back and then the people screaming, "Ey, the war started!" Japan! Wow!

FS: What did you think?

RY: I thought, "Gee, what's this?" Yeah, this is a very hard position. I was educated in Japan. My parents live in Japan. And three kids working and living in Hawaii. But those days, you know, I'm just about seventeen years old, sixteen years old in fact, so thinking and worrying, was very hard. I don't know what the heck. I don't know what is a war. Until next day, coming to Honolulu by bus, passing Aiea, I saw all the American ships, all upside down.

GY: The ships in Pearl Harbor...

RY: I found out, this is war that we didn't know. So I came down Honolulu and worked.

FS: And you continued to work.

RY: Yes, continued coming to work.

FS: When were your arrested, then?

RY: When I arrested...

FS: Did it happen right away?

RY: No, not right away. So on the day you're talking about, FBI came to Nuuanu Auto looking for me. I was working outside, but someone call.

FS: When was this that they came to see you?

RY: The day I got interned!

GY: It was May 6, 1942.

RY: Yes, May 6, 1942.

FS: So it was about a year later that you were arrested? About a year.

RY: No, something about six, seven months.

FS: Now when they came, who came to arrest you?

- RY: No, I didn't know. So when I came back from lunch, our boss, Mr. Sakai, says, "They want you to come to Dillingham Building."
- FS: Who wanted you to go to the Dillingham Building?
- RY: The FBI told Mr. Sakai. He's the owner of Nuuanu Auto. They said after lunch, go down there 1 o'clock. "I got to take you go down there," he told me. So that's when I...
- FS: This is when you were seventeen.
- RY: Yes, I was seventeen.
- FS: Was anybody else in the family...?
- RY: No.
- FS: Where were you taken after the Dillingham Building?
- RY: The immigration station on Kapiolani Boulevard? Same place. So Dillingham and Immigration Station, right there.
- FS: That's more Ala Moana, I think.
- RY: Ala Moana, yes. Same.
- FS: So from the Dillingham Building they took you to the immigration office. Why did they have to take you from the Dillingham Building to the immigration office?
- RY: They going to lock me up there. They said immigration, they have just like jail, you know; get two. You know plenty people from different countries coming to United States, they have to go through the immigration system, so they have a place to stay, but they are cages, a woman place and a man place.
- GY: I would like to interrupt. The FBI offices were in the Dillingham Building. They questioned him, "ID"ed him and then took him to the immigration center.
- RY: Yes, they checked me there, asked me all kinds of questions, and I cannot go back already.
- FS: Because in other cases, some internees were taken directly to immigration and this is the first case I know of where they were taken to the Dillingham Building.
- RY: Yes. They asked me all kind of questions.

FS: And then they took you to the immigration office. Okay, I understand now. At the immigration office, what happened?

RY: It was late, about 5 o'clock or 6 o'clock in the afternoon. So I went out to the front office or whatever. I had to take out everything. Wallet and everything, just right into the cage.

FS: What kind of place was it?

RY: What kind of place? Oh, had about fifty or sixty beds packing in there, but nobody... I [went] through over there, you know. When I came in from Japan to Honolulu, I [went] through the same place. I was there the same place, went to the same place, but different was not like one bed. This one was three-deck bed, maybe sixty in there.

FS: Sixty men?

RY: Sixty bed.

FS: And sixty men were there?

RY: Yes, close to sixty was. I was way up so probably almost full.

FS: You were probably the younger one so they put you at the top?

RY: (Laughs.) Older guys were all there. You know everybody through there to go to Sand Island.

FS: How long did you stay at the immigration office building?

RY: Oh, I think was two months I think.

FS: During that time, what did you do or what happened?

RY: Nothing. Nothing I do. Cannot go out. They had about seventy or eighty people too. It's not combined but we not going to eat one time. They separate them, group by group, go outside there. They have a place, sitting on the ground.

FS: But you had nothing to do?

RY: Oh, yes, come back from the mess hall. Nothing!

FS: During that time didn't anybody question you again?

RY: Nothing.

FS: No one asked you more questions?

RY: No, nothing. No, no. So after we moved to Sand Island, then I got the paper.

FS: Didn't you have any visitors?

RY: No, no visitors. Nothing can do.

FS: So how did your brother know that you were at the immigration office?

RY: I don't know.

GY: I guess the people at Nuuanu Auto told them.

RY: Because my things all there. I had working clothes on. Dirty shoes.

FS: So no visitors were allowed at the immigration office?

RY: No, no, none.

GY: They were just imprisoned. Nothing to do. Cramped quarters.

FS: Detention. Automatic detention. Without further questioning.

And then, after that, you were transported to Sand Island, is that right?

RY: Sand Island, that's right.

FS: Two months later.

RY: Yes.

FS: Now at Sand Island, did you have the same kind of rooms or did you...?

RY: Yes. Not the three deck though, but double deck bed in Army barracks, you know Army barracks, long one.

FS: Oh, you had barracks?

RY: Yes.

FS: You didn't have to make your own tents.

RY: No. I heard right after war started, those people interned right away like was a tent, Sand Island. But my time, they had a barracks. We had four barracks.

FS: Two people sharing one barracks?

RY: No, no. The barracks is big. So in barracks maybe two, so maybe sixty or fifty people in one barracks, but that's up and down now, so it's going to be a hundred in one barracks.

FS: About a hundred in one barracks. But you have your own room?

RY: No, no. It's...

FS: Open. Then you have no privacy at all.

RY: Oh, no, no.

FS: I see. Did you have typical Army housing, then?

RY: No.

FS: Was there an officer who would come by to tell you these things?

RY: No field officer.

FS: Who told you to do all those things?

RY: Oh, the people working there, yes, the soldier tell you what to do. They going inspect their own anyway. Every day inspection.

FS: Was there barbed wire around?

RY: Oh, yes. Double. Electric wires.

FS: Oh, I see. And how did you manage to spend your time there?

RY: Well, when you get up in the morning, you have to make your own bed, and everybody gotta walk. And then the soldier have to head count. Line up, head count, every morning. And then start to eating. I think had about 500 people, so group by group. Meantime they inspecting the bed and especially the toilet have to be really clean. If the guy is in a bad mood, "Do over again!"

FS: Did you take turns doing that?

RY: Yeah, we take a turn and clean, sweep, and clean the toilet.

FS: Typical of Army life.

RY: Yes, typical Army life.

FS: How was the food?

RY: Well, food is American food. We had rice, typical Hawaii soldier life menu. Pork and beans and what not. (Laughs.) That's what our life is. Pork and beans.

FS: How long did you stay at Sand Island?

RY: Probably maybe four months, three months, because I went -- maybe five months. Meanwhile they asking for volunteers to go mainland camp. And then they just want to separate, segregate.

FS: Did they question you during all this time?

RY: No. No questions. The paper.

FS: The only time they questioned you was at the FBI?

RY: FBI. Yes. So they want to... I heard, at the end of 1942, I heard the mainland camp is open so they want us to go down there. And I heard it's good. Bigger place. They have more like ordinary life because family can go. That was the attraction. This Sand Island is no place for family, especially those people are married people or some people like us, I want to expose myself or learn something. We can get something, that's what I heard. That was the main attraction to me. I don't want to stay here and do nothing. Afterward I started to learn something from Sanji Abe and those Big Island's well-known company... Sakakibara...

FS: That's here, while you were at Sand Island?

RY: Yes. Roommate, Sanji Abe.

GY: They were the politicians...

RY: He was a representative, politician.

GY: ...on the Big Island.

RY: Sakakibara.

FS: You learned a lot from all of them.

RY: They talking about life, Hawaii life. That's all we can do... get together. Especially I end up in Sand Island with plenty Hilo people. Sakakibara, Sanji Abe, Arakawa, Dr. Kuwahara. I remember his name. And then they talk about, even Sakakibara, talk about politics. You know he's a representative, that one.

FS: And so you had no other work to do, so you naturally spent your time talking.

RY: We played cards everyday. That's all we can do. So when second time I met Sanji Abe he couldn't recognize me, that was so sad. So I have a picture here.

FS: So in other words you decided to volunteer to go to Jerome...

RY: Yes.

FS: ...with the whole group of people.

RY: No, well, a group of people who want to go. So lots of young people, or some family that left wife and kids, moved. Like Sakakibara and Sanji Abe, they established so much in Hawaii, they don't want to move, I think. That's the reason, that I don't know, but they never sign up, but I went. I signed.

FS: You were never at Honouliuli then?

RY: No. Honouliuli wasn't there. One time we heard in the camp, this politician was telling us, the intern camp in Sand Island is illegal. Right in front us on the beach, a barbed wire fence, the machine guns facing the outside, protecting Honolulu. They practiced shooting. We were right behind the machine gun... our camp. So they was hurrying to make one someplace, that's why they moved to Honouliuli. So Honouliuli is later on, I don't know what, half year later, one year later, I don't know.

FS: Now when you were sent to the mainland, when did you go? Do you remember?

RY: When? About January 1943. We were shipped to Oakland by military ship.

FS: What was it like to be on a military ship?

RY: Military ship, well, I was all the way sick, but you know, military ship, we had a group of people, for instance I know one guy's name, Okada family, had kids. He was probably about ten years old. He entertain us.

GY: Guitar?

RY: Not a guitar, it was...

FS: Ukulele?

RY: Not a ukulele, not a violin.

FS: Anyway, he entertained you.

RY: He entertained us. So and then we start to, inside there, we had play cards and *Igo* [Japanese game]. That was stuff I learned from Mr. Abe. I know one kid, he was a

young man, just about the same age like Okada boy. The boy from Wahiawa, I think. Rev. Matsuda. The kids, the boy, learned go from our group.

FS: So you did do things to pass the time, such as playing *Igo*. Anything else?

RY: That's about all. Took about seven days to reaching down there.

FS: Now, you're in Oakland and from there you had to go to Jerome by...

RY: Train. Old train. Burned coal.

FS: How many days did it take?

RY: Five days. This was hell! Really hell. This five days in train, back in train. I think one train is for the mess hall. Train in the sitting position, like this. Five days. Day and night, you have to sit like this. You cannot go outside. You know get one toilet; four people in there. No opening. Just cage.

FS: Did you have barbed wire... not barbed wire...bars on the train?

RY: Yes, barred, on the train. But this five days, especially coming to sleeping time like, this is hell. Sit down... five days... chair. I thought I'd come crazy. I want to lie down, I want to stretch...

FS: Did you have a chance to walk around or...?

RY: No.

FS: Did you go to the train mess car to eat?

RY: Yes.

FS: So that was the only time that you really walked around?

RY: Yes.

FS: Were there many stops along the way?

RY: Yes, we had a stop. Sometimes stop three or four hours.

FS: Every three or four hours?

RY: What I heard is they had only one track. So other train coming, so you stop on side. They have a special place to stop. And they waiting for the track to open. No more precise time that they coming. Sometime we wait one hour, sometime three, four hours.

FS: And all in the same clothes that you had?

RY: That's right. Nothing can change. Nothing in the fully packed train. I don't know how many people was there.

FS: All through the night you traveled.

RY: Yes, day and night.

FS: No bath.

RY: No, no. No bath.

FS: Five days.

RY: But not only that. You know, old train, burning coal. You come all black. No matter how much you close, we have to sometimes open, you know, come black. You really come black.

FS: Thank you for that interesting episode. I haven't heard too many stories about the train ride. So now you finally got to Jerome. What happened then?

RY: Our group was fortunate people. Before us, previous people reached Arkansas. They were ready and waiting for us Hawaii people. Especially, even Dr. Miyamoto, I know one more doctor, that guy that took care of me, Dr. Ikuta. Lots of people was waiting for us.

FS: You had a good welcome party.

RY: Well...

FS: After all that time.

RY: Yes.

FS: And then you were assigned to the different barracks?

RY: Yes. All the barracks were separated. Hawaii people came, my barracks was called 38. 41, 40, 39 and us were 38. So all the barracks was Hawaii people.

FS: How did you feel after all those difficult times, seeing Hawaii people again?

RY: Well, not like today kind of feeling. I can't explain or describe. I'm too young or what. But I know I was happy to see Hawaii people, no question about it.

FS: Okay, then, now you're settled in your quarters. What was it like? Was it a nice place to be in?

RY: You see, when we reached there it was winter. Even though Arkansas is cold, before moving from Hawaii to the mainland, they issued us Army coats, full Army coat, one half coat—a blue one, a Navy coat, and that's all we depended on in that winter in mainland. Very hard. When we got there, snow was there, because our camp is look like way up the mountain. So the snow was there. So life is kind of new, new kind of life, we have to [get] used to.

FS: How many people in your barracks?

RY: One barracks I think maybe hundred?

FS: You had a barrack leader?

RY: We had a barrack manager, taking care the whole barracks. Something about hundred, I think. Had a mess hall in the center of the barracks. And then the toilet in the center.

FS: In another building.

RY: Yes, another building. Take a shower and what not.

FS: Laundry.

RY: Yes, laundry place.

FS: And everybody all together in that one barracks, no privacy?

RY: No, no. These barracks were separated into fur units.

FS: It was a little bit more comfortable?

RY: Oh, yes. One building for four families.

FS: But the bachelors all in one section and the families in another barracks? No?

RY: Yes, yes. That's what it is.

FS: How did you get along with everybody else?

RY: Well, for our barracks, get one mess hall. Hundred people, every day you see them. Every meal you see same people there. You know each other.

FS: And you did get along with everybody. Nobody had any problems.

RY: No, no, no trouble.

FS: That's wonderful.

RY: So the barrack people had a job assigned by authority, I guess... cook, serving, like that. Everybody was working.

FS: All had jobs to do.

RY: Yes, yes.

FS: They took turns?

RY: No.

FS: Oh, you had a specific job.

RY: I never had a job.

FS: Why not?

RY: Because some people had a job, but not us.

FS: What kind of jobs were there?

RY: Well, they need a cook. Every morning get up and cook. They had a dishwasher and everything going on.

FS: I guess help too in the hospital? Somebody to work in the hospital?

RY: Oh, yes. We had a big hospital. A separate place.

FS: You didn't want to do any work?

RY: No, job is not too much. Only for maintain the barracks. And then hospital and then school, they had teachers and what not. Janitor work and what not.

FS: So you couldn't find any work.

RY: No, we cannot find. No job. Was all taken.

FS: Did you at any time get offers of jobs outside of camp?

RY: Outside of camp, no.

FS: No one came to offer a job to work outside?

RY: No, camp is only the camp people, ten thousand people taking care of the mess hall and that's all. That's all the job. Administration work, teachers, so besides that, no job.

FS: Then you had nothing to do.

RY: No.

FS: How did you spend your time?

RY: (Laughs.) That's a hard one. But I had a friend. I met a good friend named Kazama. He and I came from Japan on the same boat. And then at immigration, we were together. And then we were at Sand Island right through to Arkansas and Tule Lake. He's a black belt judo man. He telling us to take the judo when I reach Arkansas. "You should start to do something." But he's a judo man. He said that the judo club started by Dr. Miyamoto is taking charge of the young people, so let's take judo. So I start my judo in Arkansas. In fact, I have all the pictures of the judo club.

FS: So you joined this class.

RY: Yes, judo club.

FS: I understand there were many different clubs or classes that you could join or attend to spend your time.

RY: Yes, yes.

FS: So it was judo only for you.

RY: For me, yes. Judo.

FS: Did you take anything else?

RY: Anything else? Maybe I go play *go*. And card game. Some people played mah jongg though; plenty mah jongg was going on.

FS: I'm sure they made their things.

RY: Yes, yes.

FS: The chess.

RY: Even *go*, everything.

FS: They made their own because you didn't have the supplies.

RY: That's right. Amazing things they can do.

FS: I guess you know when you have to, you find a way to do things; otherwise you can really go crazy. So that was your free time primarily.

RY: Yes.

FS: How was the food or anything else that you may or may not have liked?

RY: Arkansas was pretty good food, but, you know, Hawaii people, local people taking care of, so no trouble with the food.

FS: How did they get their supplies?

RY: Supplies from the administration. You know if you get close to eight thousand... I think in Arkansas it was close to ten thousand people that's the biggest supply thing coming from the outside. People eat, so the government have to supply that.

FS: Even rice?

RY: Yes, we had a lot of rice. So we getting Japanese food... Japanese cook.

FS: You didn't have any problems with the food shortage or anything like that?

RY: Not until I moved to another camp, Tule Lake.

FS: I see, okay. How about your health?

RY: Yes, I was healthy, but I had a little thing going so I had to see Dr. Miyamoto. And he tells me this ulcer has to be operated. So I went to the hospital.

FS: Was it in the camp?

RY: Yes, in the camp.

FS: And so you had this surgery?

RY: Yes, I had the surgery.

FS: Were the conditions in the hospital good?

RY: Yes, all Japanese nurse, Japanese doctors, you know. Most of the doctors is Japanese.

FS: So you had very little contact with the American authorities, then.

RY: Yes, fortunately for me, those doctors were internees from Hawaii and took good care of me. Without doctors, camp no exist.

FS: They were all working without pay.

RY: No, their pay was \$14 per month, I think, something like that. Other people work, \$12 a month. 40-hours.

FS: How did you manage to save any money, if you were not working?

RY: I'm broke. I'm close to broke. I think I had some money from my brother. I don't know how much he's giving me, something like \$40 or something like that. I was hanging on to it. They feed me. Everything was free but [except] things you buy at the canteen.

FS: So you couldn't buy anything at the canteen.

RY: Yes. Actually, I just don't know whether they give us \$6 a month, or something like that, even no work. I don't remember, but I don't have too much money. Ordinary people, I think, \$8 a month? \$8 and \$12, something like that. Professional people is at \$12. You work fireman or taking care of the place, \$8 a month, \$12 a month, something like that. I know once I work so...

FS: Was there any trouble at Jerome?

RY: Yes, as soon as I reach at Jerome, it's not our trouble, but trouble from the administration. I don't know how soon, but anyway, when we reached down there, they sent to us a piece of paper saying that you have to sign this -- saying that you are loyal to the United States.

FS: That was at Jerome?

RY: Jerome. Your name and address, and this and that, were you at Jerome or not, so they sent us a paper. Within two months or three months, we all need this papers. Sign it, send them back to the administration.

FS: What did they ask on that paper?

RY: We thought, everybody kind of knew, they want to work on Selective Service in the camp. If you're loyal to the United States and if you were of age, you have to go in the Army. But everybody have to sign, adult, young and old.

FS: And so, you signed it?

RY: So if you don't sign this, within two or three months, we're going to lock you up. But I never sign.

FS: Why didn't you sign?

RY: Because I already signed with paper in Hawaii. So I don't sign. So I don't know when exactly, two months or one month, but time come, I went to the administration. I took my toothpaste, and toothbrush, and then one towel.

FS: Only you?

RY: No, plenty people. I don't remember how many people. I know my friend, my roommates, did not sign.

FS: What was the reasoning for not signing?

RY: So I went to the administration. You asked me the questions, same as U.S. immigration. Why? I told them that I already signed this paper down Hawaii. You from the FBI. Where am I? I'm in Arkansas. What good to me, this paper? I'm already signed, so I'm not going to sign twice. But if you want me to sign this, you send me Hawaii, and I sign for you. Not in here. Not in here, I'm going sign. That's the reason. So you wait outside. Afternoon come. Go home. Go to your barracks. Why not jail? No more jail. I'm already in jail! We in the jail remember. Arkansas camp is the jail!

FS: So they just sent you home?

RY: Yes, we go home.

FS: Back to the barracks.

RY: Yes, home.

FS: Without anything else happening.

RY: No, nothing.

FS: But then, now, is that why they sent you to Tule Lake?

RY: That's the only reason I can see. I heard that they were segregating people. So I didn't say I'm disloyal to the United States or anything. Not only that, I told the administration, you know, I say I'm a minor. I'm only 18 years old. Those days adult is 21.

FS: In other words, you were reacting to what the authorities said. You decided you didn't want your American citizenship?

RY: Yes.

FS: Ah, you were very upset, then.

RY: Yes, yes. You know why people were doing those things – no future. I read one article in Japanese paper saying that this going to be twenty-five-year war. In the camp, we heard a ten-year war. What we're going do for ten years or fifteen years in camp? They want to go someplace, you know. They are really mixed-up people in the camp. They don't know what to do, especially young ones like us. We want to go someplace. Some people, old people, very hard for the old people. So they want to hang neck, you know.

FS: So you did have people became crazy.

RY: Fifteen-year war. What does that mean? We don't hear anything that we're going out, or to Japan. That's the reason we're here.

FS: So you had no newspapers either, in camp?

RY: No, nothing. We don't have no news.

FS: You had no communication from outside?

RY: No. I heard some people smuggle in the radio or something, but no radio, nothing.

FS: So this is at Jerome, when you decided that you wanted to give up your American citizenship?

RY: Yes. But my case is no. So wait until you come 21 years old.

GY: Because he was a minor, they wouldn't accept his...

FS: I see, rejection.

RY: Without my parents...

FS: He wasn't capable of deciding for himself yet. I see. Oh, so you were left out in limbo then?

RY: That's right.

FS: Okay, I understand now. When then did you go to Tule Lake? Was it after all this happened?

RY: Yes. After all this happened, we went to Tule Lake, when was it?

FS: So you were at Jerome for about how many years?

RY: Not a year, about eight months.

FS: Not even a year. So it was soon afterwards.

RY: Was 1943?

FS: About 1943. Can you tell us how you went from Jerome to Tule Lake? Was it by train again?

RY: Yes. By train, that's the one I really hate. Another five days from there to Tule Lake. Why I say that is because Tule Lake is in California.

FS: Did the authorities tell you why you were being sent?

RY: No, no reason. Just sent. Just ordered us to go.

FS: When you got to Tule Lake, how was the reception? Did you see a lot of people?

RY: Yes. Tule Lake, I think we reached in October 1943, so it was cold, very cold. This time when we reached Tule Lake camp, was same thing like other one, Jerome, it was afternoon. In fact, it was dark already. Nothing waiting for us, even food. We don't know where to go. Nothing prepared at Tule Lake. Poor welcome, right? So that's the way it was.

FS: There were guards who led you to the camp, weren't there?

RY: Yes. But from the camp, I think somebody lead us to recreation hall. I don't know how I had supper, I don't remember. But I know everything was dark already. So that night we had to sleep in the recreation hall. Fortunately, my friend's big brother reached Tule Lake before us and he reserved our room for us next to his. We found him the next day. He was looking for us. He said, "You belong to #70 in Tule Lake camp."

FS: That was Barracks 70?

RY: Yes, Barracks 70.

FS: What was the barrack like this time? The same as in Jerome?

RY: Yes, same as Jerome. Same structures, but for us, lucky that Oshita's brother was waiting for us.

FS: What happened here?

RY: This place was kind of bad. I think from next day we were there, we were new so we kind of late, when we went they say, "No more bread." "Hey, what happened?" The manager telling us, "Well, if you want bread, come early." That was the answer. So this is the beginning of Tule Lake incident.

FS: Now when was this, do you remember?

RY: This happened a few days later, but anyway, we asked.

FS: You didn't have breakfast that day then?

RY: No, we had breakfast but it was not enough.

FS: I see, not enough. And so you decided to go and see the authorities?

RY: Yes. That night we went to the block manager, "What's going on? It's kind of rough in this camp." We asked him because he's in this camp kind of long time.

FS: Was the block manager of any help?

RY: No. You know, young people is hungry. He said, "Sometime drink water."

FS: So he didn't help you at all.

RY: He couldn't help. He kind of mad at us.

FS: Oh, he got angry at you.

RY: Because we complained.

FS: What did you do after that?

RY: We couldn't do anything. That's the answer so meantime we talk about those things.

FS: Who did you talk to after the block manager?

RY: Well, first of all, I talked to my roommates.

FS: And did you all get together?

RY: We heard rumors and they had proof [that] the government foods were stolen and sold at canteens instead of serving us.

FS: So from there, what did you do?

RY: So we discussed with other friends and then we heard that everybody else getting same trouble. Meantime too much complaints so I guess the authority from Washington is coming to the camp. That's what we heard.

FS: So you went to see them?

RY: So the day we heard when he's coming, I think someone went to the mess hall and announced that they coming from Washington and go to the administration. That afternoon about 10,000 internees show up, surround the administration.

FS: That's all of you.

RY: Yes.

FS: Did the authorities talk to you?

RY: Yes, we had a negotiator talk to the Washington negotiators.

FS: Did you get a good answer?

RY: Yes, we had a good answer. They said they'd try to do something about it, so everyone went home. Before we went home, some incident happened. We don't know why. What incident is this? The incident was they martial lawed the camp.

FS: Right after they sent you back?

RY: Yes. Tanks and soldiers come into the camp. Yes. Instead of talk, negotiate for better hospital and better food system, they start to martial law the place and they start to beat the people.

FS: Beat the people.

RY: Our negotiator and Washington negotiator did not solve the problems. Instead they opened up the stockade. They interned all the leaders and others in the stockade. Instead of improvements, everything came worse.

FS: And it all started because of the food conditions?

RY: Yes, food and hospital. Mainly food and hospital, I think.

FS: What was the trouble with the hospital?

RY: Not enough people and not enough equipment. I know what I heard is that they have a complaint.

FS: So when everybody went back to the barracks, the tanks came in.

RY: They say from 6 or 6:30 afternoon, everybody in their room. And then I heard tanks coming in. Without martial law, the Army or FBI cannot come in, so they made the camp under martial law.

FS: Is that when they began arresting people?

RY: Yes. That's when they were arresting people. They arresting close to 400 people, in the stockade.

FS: Were you one of them?

RY: Yes. I think was second night of the martial law.

FS: Do you know why you were picked to be arrested?

RY: No, no, no. They had a black list. So my roommates also went.

FS: How long were you in the stockade?

RY: Eight months, nine months?

FS: During that time, did they feed you and take care of...

RY: Oh, yes. We had some of the cooks. We had a mess hall. It's four hundred people. Just like one block.

FS: Did the authorities explain why you were arrested?

RY: No, no, no.

FS: Not at all?

RY: Not at all. Probably after three or four months, gradually start to release the people.

FS: Were you released early or late?

RY: Late.

FS: Could it be that you were considered one of the leaders?

RY: No, I'm not a leader.

FS: You just happened to be one of those that they came after.

RY: Yes, me and my three roommates.

FS: Is that when you started your hunger strike?

RY: No, later.

FS: Was there any reason for it?

RY: We asking for any hearing or something. We never got. Not only hearing but we heard the bad news that they sending us someplace. What's coming to the hunger strike was, little by little, they was releasing something about close to four hundred people went down to about nineteen or twenty.

FS: So you mean between nineteen or twenty people started to do that hunger strike?

RY: No. In the meantime another incident happened in the camp. One person got murdered. I had nothing to do with it. I'm stuck in the stockade.

FS: That made your release even more difficult.

RY: Yes. But meantime, more people got released and only nine people got stuck. Then we heard bad news that they going to send us out to other camps.

FS: Send them out. Send who out? Send you out?

RY: No, no, no. Send to another camp.

FS: Send you out to another camp?

GY: The remaining nine were to be sent somewhere else.

RY: I stuck there. So we had a good leader, the Rev. Kai. So he suggesting we going to hunger strike to get release from the stockade. We discuss about it and then we prepare.

FS: Did you succeed?

RY: Yes, we did succeed. Took us almost one month total.

FS: In the meantime, you just didn't eat except to drink water?

RY: Yes. So for preparing this, the Rev. Kai said, only we can survive with water. Try to get your water, gallon a day. We don't know how long, but drink the water. So that's what we started. When 12 day come, Yamane fainted, so we call the guard, have to go in the hospital. And doctor come in and took us hospital.

FS: All of you?

RY: All of us. Yamane went to special place because he fainted. Took us hospital. Our leader said, "The authorities says treatment and food and go back to camp, but without releasing us we had to go back to the stockade."

FS: You had to go back to the stockade?

RY: So after recover, we not going to eat. So while we staying hospital, authorities say after you folks recover, back to no more rice. So we start to eating. Start from milk. Took us about five days. And then all nine go back to stockade again. And so we start again, our starvation.

FS: They're in the stockade for how many days?

RY: Almost one year.

FS: And in the meantime every time somebody fainted or got ill, you had to go to the hospital?

RY: Now you mean the starvation? Yamane, the one who fainted, he continued too, so nine of us continued with starvation.

FS: And you were able to survive on water for eight months?

RY: No, after twelve days, everybody went to the hospital. We eat five days because we can go back to normal. But the promise is broke. Back to stockade again. So we continue our starvation another nine days. It took us nine days. Close to the middle of the night, eleven o'clock, or ten o'clock, anyway after lights off, Dr. Miyamoto, and authority people, came to pick us up and then saying that we going to release you guys tomorrow. This time with release papers. Sign and then going out. So Dr. Miyamoto recommend us to stop and start eating.

FS: In the hospital?

RY: In the stockade. So we got the paper, in the stockade, not only that one guy told me, "Yamamoto-san, you go out tomorrow morning."

FS: But this was after eight months, you said.

RY: Yes. It took us eight months. But starvation 12 days and 9 days.

FS: And then you gave it up.

RY: Yes. So we got the release. Back to camp.

FS: My, that was an experience.

RY: Yes, it's funny, you know. We had all this kind things going on. "You know you folks did a good job. You know, my kids...more milk, extra milk, and this and that, for the kids. Great improvement." Lots of people, they don't know what happens, you know.

FS: Were there any other problems at Tule Lake for you?

RY: Yes, I had. When I was released from the stockade, my good friend, Kazama's roommate, talking about our future, about whether... something about our language. He said he want to learn English. Why not we start our schooling? He said he can find out from the system. So he's going to school. We starting our education. So that's why I bought annual book and what not. So when I start to going school...

FS: Was it easy?

RY: No, so hard. But I want to get education. So I don't have no English education. Three months in Hawaii night school, that's all I had, so I fully want go school. So when I start to going school, friend of us saying that some of the gang want to fight.

FS: Is this the Hokokukai who pledged allegiance to Japan?

RY: No, I don't know who are they but we found out who are they. We don't want to sit and wait so we went and then we fight and they fight.

FS: The people who didn't want you to learn English?

RY: So just because we learn English or I don't know! But they don't know, lots of people don't know what's going on in camp. But that's twenty thousand people, you know. All kinds of people are there, so we want to finish the things.

FS: So you had a fight and then what happened?

RY: Went to school.

FS: Was it settled? Did you settle the fight?

RY: We settled the fight. And then...

FS: You continued to learn English?

RY: Yes, but that day, I went to school and I came back.

FS: Because of the fight, there was a warrant.

RY: Yes. I came back from school and this man came to our room, knocked on the door.

FS: So you got arrested again?

RY: Yes. That night, without supper...(Laughs).

FS: Did you have to go to the stockade again?

RY: No, this time, the jail. Had real jail. Not in California, but...

FS: Outside of camp?

RY: Yes, outside the camp. Klamath Falls, Oregon. I don't know, took about three, four hours. When we reached there, it was kind of midnight.

FS: How long were you in jail?

RY: Was Thursday or Friday. They cannot have our trial in camp, so we have to wait until next week, so we have to stay in jail for weekend. I think Wednesday or something.

FS: And the whole group was arrested, no just you but everybody in the fight?

RY: Only us. Four of us.

FS: Did you have your trial?

RY: Yes, I had a trial this time.

FS: What was the verdict? Were you declared innocent or guilty?

RY: I don't know. It's not guilty. So the judge was a principal of the high school, so he told me, asked me, whether I went to school that the day. I told him, "Yes, I did." I told him, "I never involved this. I don't know. This fight, I no involved. For me, no, I wasn't there. I went school," I said.

FS: You were actually not in the fight.

RY: I was watching. But I didn't say. Usually we are the good luck people. Only a couple people involved, so some people just watched. This can become big. So we have a group, the guy who can fight, you know. But anyway, no, I never involved in the fight.

FS: Then did the judge let you go after that?

RY: Yes. Six months, what do you call that?

FS: Probation?

RY: Probation. Continue school.

FS: You've had a very exciting life.

RY: Yes. So those things were interrupting us, very much so. But I continued school though.

FS: Very good. Now when did you find out that you were going to be released to come back to Hawaii... 1945?

RY: They had a bulletin board, I think. If you were released, or free, your name going to come out. I think it took mine about two months later, I think it was. September.

FS: So you were not the first to be released?

RY: No. A roommate never got released. Kazama and I, the ones that came together from Japan, got released. He and I discussed now where we going because authorities says [those] who come from Hawaii cannot go back. No airplane or shipping to take you folks back. United States, anywhere in the United States. We'll give you twenty-five dollars and the ticket. If you want to go New York, we get you a New York ticket.

FS: And what did you decide?

RY: I decided Seattle. I heard plenty people in the camp were Seattle people because that near California, Tule Lake. So I decided to go Seattle and a good friend of mine told me, "You decided?" I told him, "Seattle." "Don't you ever go Seattle. It's getting to cold in October. September already. What you got?" he says. "I got one coat here." "Not enough. You cannot go north." He tell me to go south.

FS: So what did you decide?

RY: I decide, I want to stay near Oakland. I want to come back Honolulu. Only thing I know is that Oakland taking me Honolulu. (Laughs.) That's the kind of knowledge I had.

FS: You were really anxious to...

RY: I'm so... come to the United States I don't know where. So I want to go Oakland. So I got an Oakland ticket and \$25.

FS: And what did you do in Oakland when you got there?

RY: Good friend of mine told us how to survive. They say Japanese call how to *ikiru*, how to "alive." He said, "You, how much you got?" "\$25." "Okay," they say, "you need a roof. You need a food. That's what you got to look for. Well, school boy job. Work for school, and they feed you one meal and they give you one room. As soon as you reach Oakland, go to the employment office, school boy job. You don't speak English so ask for the school boy job."

FS: And did you find a job?

RY: Not in Oakland. Oakland people say, "Go the San Francisco." So from Oakland to San Francisco, walk up Market Street, employment office. Very late, I start walking. Plenty school boy job.

FS: Your employer.

- RY: I forgot his name. But second people, the top guy, he no bother me. I don't speak English and what not. So I have to get another job. Next one is the Mr. Turner. His name because I stay with him almost a month or so.
- FS: So you worked for two people?
- RY: School boy job. Was thirty dollar, thirty-five dollar a month.
- FS: Enough to help you to come back?
- RY: No.
- FS: How long did you work as a school boy, then?
- RY: About three months. Practically every week I went to San Francisco, Market Place, to a WRA [War Relocation Agency] office. Every day I knocking door. "Give me the ticket." Because they're telling me, "Why don't you get the money from your brother?" I told him, "I'm not here for vacation. You, government, got to give me a ticket. My understanding is that you folks got me from Hawaii to here, but your duty, you got to supply me from mainland to Hawaii port at your money, not my money. Give me the ticket." I say, "Not only that, don't too much run around, I suffering." So every week I show up, "Hey, where's my ticket?" They said, "No more boat." He said, "You guys, if no more boat, no way."
- FS: So you had to wait until there was a ship. How long was that?
- RY: Oh, couple months. Before 1945 Christmas—December 28, 1945. "On December 28," he said, "you can go on the boat." So my boss, Dr. Turner, said, "I'm going to have a New Year's party here, Christmas party here, so you gotta help me out." I said, "Of course, until I'm going boat, I need place to sleep." So I worked for him until that night, Christmas money. He was an insurance man, insurance agent, so big crowd.
- FS: So you worked until it was time to leave.
- RY: Yes. He said, "I take you go to the boat. You have a suitcase? I don't think you know how to go there, so I take you go there."
- FS: He was a good employer.
- RY: Yes, yes. He was nice to me.
- FS: Now that you were able to board the ship and come home.
- RY: Yes, New Year's 1946, I was on the boat. I reached Honolulu January 4. Then my status changed to A-1. I come back to the Americans. I have to take a physical exam at Tripler

Hospital. But when I reached Tripler Hospital, I cannot read, I cannot write. Only I can write my name, so that's what I did. Nothing answer question or anything. I signed my name and *pau* [Hawaiian: finished]. I told them I cannot speak.

FS: You said you started working. You started working where?

RY: Same place. My brother's place.

FS: Did you ever go into the military?

RY: Yes, I did.

FS: When was that?

RY: 1948. Second physical exam and second paper from there, Selective Service. I did same thing. I cannot speak. I cannot write, so only I wrote my name. Few months later, I had a greeting from American government [that] I gotta go in the Army. I think it was December 1948.

FS: So where did you go?

RY: I thought, just like my Kazama case. He get education and everything and not only the education, he was ready to go to University of Hawaii, you know, to get his education and then. He and I in the same kind of situation was. So instead of going to the Army, regular Army, he want to volunteer the Army. He want to continue his education, so he quit University of Hawaii. He had already registered at the University of Hawaii and he was going to the University of Hawaii, but this Selective Service coming in, so he volunteered the Army, he took the test and everything. Everything okay. He was going Army before me, so we made party for him and we make bye-bye to him. But when he show up Selective Service, the morning, going Army, FBI people came up. "Mr. Kazama. Come. Go home."

FS: What about you, in your case?

RY: Well, I wasn't in the same position. When my time come, I thought I going get same thing. So I went Selective Service. I went Iwilei. I thought somebody going show up. Nobody show up. So I went to the Schofield, starting my Army life.

FS: I see.

RY: That's right. But you know, talk about delay of your life. Today I think about Mr. Kazama. They delayed his life so many times, through government. He had everything going for him to University of Hawaii. And then he quit and he went, then they throw him out. But anyway, in my case, it was different.

FS: You went right through. How many years of Army work?

RY: Even in the Army, you know, I thought I can get discharged because I don't understand. I went to see him. People say that, "You got to see the Captain. You cannot be American soldier without American education." So I did same thing, I told them, "I cannot. If you tell me go left, I'm going right. I don't know what the heck you're talking about. How can I graduate Basic Training?" The sergeant told me, "You can." I struggled, but I graduate Army Basic Training. Took us three months.

FS: And then where did you go after that?

RY: After that, the Korean 5th Infantry moved to Schofield Barracks and organized one big unit out there. That's where they took me inside there. 5th Infantry Mortar Company.

FS: So you were stationed at Schofield with this unit.

RY: Yes.

FS: And you served until...

RY: Well, here you are. Not only the 5th Infantry, what a strange thing happened in the 5th Infantry. The first thing I saw, couple of Hawaiians playing guitar and singing, you know. I looked at the one guy, the guy tell me, "What your name?" "Yamamoto." "You know, you familiar, you know." "What's your name?" "I'm Okada." "Okada? You were in Jerome Camp?" "Yes, I was in Jerome Camp. I was young." That guy that enjoyed, entertained, from here to Oakland, I met him 5th Infantry. Really surprised. I continued my 5th Infantry...

FS: Until when?

RY: Until 1949 end, we got notice from Army saying that those people inducted in '48, early part of '49, after you finish your one year in Army, you folks get choice: in Army as 24 months inductee, or if you want to get released from the Army, you have to go Reserve, Hawaii Reserve, 442nd Reserve; or you want to volunteer for Army, you can do that also.

FS: What did you do?

RY: So 1950 come, I says, "Thank you, I'm going out. Give me 442nd Reserve," and I was discharged from the Army. And so if you go to the Reserve, once a month or so, you go to get the training.

FS: Then you went back to your job at the Nuuanu Auto Shop?

RY: No. City Car Service, my brother's service station, at Artesian and Beretania Street. I was working for my brother at the service station and then what happened was the Korean War started and then all the people were getting drafted. My brother's business was getting hard time because of the war. He losing a lot of men. And then he changed

his business. He wanted to rent the back shops. So he suggested I rent the behind and pay the rent to my brother and he can keep on going the service station. So he suggest to me to open my business—body and fender shop. That's what I did, although my financial situation wasn't good. I don't have any extra money, or something like that, but he told me that I can pay monthly for the machines and the rent, so I started my business on the Robert Auto Service. From there on, I think my life changed again, for the good. I can continue my business and before Korean War ended in 1954, I could buy a house. And the business was good for my life, but I kind of found the life without education is hard. I start to investing. Later on business and investments worked so well, so I retired from the business and started doing more investments until today.

FS: Oh, that's very nice. You did very well, then.

RY: Yes, because going back to fifty years, I worked for Japan Oil Company and I learned oil. The oil, I didn't know oil is so necessity to the human being, happened my world investment worked so good, so I still buy oil stocks.

FS: Very good. Now is there anything you'd like to tell us about the internment experience that you want to emphasize to the younger people?

RY: Yes. Fortunately, in those days, Japanese education, *shojiki*. You have to be honest. That's a very important deal, whether you successful man or an ordinary man, honesty is very important. Another one that is important, I think, mentally and financially, I think, I believe you can be a success.

FS: Do you feel any resentment about the fact that you were imprisoned in the stockade for reasons that you feel were not justified? Is there any resentment for that experience?

RY: Resentment?

FS: Do you feel hatred or unfairness or do you feel betrayed that you were imprisoned for something you feel you did not do?

RY: Yes, I look now at the internment that it was an unfortunate thing. The derailing of the human life. I know lots of people suffered because of only three, four years, we thought the war was going to be fifteen, twenty years but happened to be only four years. But the internment derailed some people's lives, especially the older people, or even young people. I know a friend of mine, he's a very honest and he was a hardworking man, but because of the unfairness of the government, he volunteered for the Army after the camp, but when he went to the induction station, everything is okay, he was going university and then he couldn't because of the army thing, so instead of going to the regular Army, he volunteered Army. Everything, his knowledge, he passed everything, he passed, he couldn't go volunteer in United States Army he went to the induction center. I congratulated him and made a party for him, and we thought everything was all right, but he had an unlucky one, maybe, when he went to the induction center, the FBI people came up and said, "You can go home."

FS: What does that mean? Does that mean that they didn't want him?

RY: They don't want him. Everything passed physically and educationally; he was ready to go university. He quit university and volunteered Army instead of inducting in Army, but he have to come back to the normal life. Take back his life. I associated him so long, just those incidents--internment, getting thrown out from the volunteer Army--he cannot come back to normal life. He just did an unlucky one.

FS: When was this?

RY: That's after '51 on. Instead went Army, he come back to civilian, and he was so unlucky man, happened to be he the best friend of mine. He and I landed in Hawaii, '41, same boat but...

FS: Do you feel that he still lost all those years because he was rejected by the Army?

RY: Yes.

FS: Did he change as a person?

RY: No, he still is a very nice person. He never change that. Maybe he was too honest, I don't know, but just cannot come back to normal life because after that he started his own business, he lost his wife, and everything not going back to the normal.

FS: Well, I guess that the lesson you want to give to the younger people is that the internment was... what kind of experience?

RY: You mean for him or me?

FS: From his viewpoint, the internment was what kind of experience?

RY: Just because of the internment, still maybe it was affecting him, I don't know how long, I know 'til 1950 or '51. See, those things financially and probably mentally, he couldn't go back to a normal life. But as a man, I know he never changed. Very nice judo man. And then he end up his life.

FS: As a judo man.

RY: Yes.

FS: Okay, thank you very much for your interesting experiences and this will conclude today's interview. Thank you very much.